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# OUR PLACE IN ENGLAND.

BY THE

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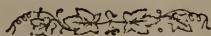
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## OUR PLACE IN ENGLAND.



ASSEMBLED as we are this day in Nottingham, we cannot forget that it was on the Castle Hill of this famous old town that Charles the First erected his war-standard on the 22nd of August, 1642. His enemies were his own subjects, and the great contention between them was whether England should be ruled by the personal will of the sovereign or according to the laws and statutes of her ancient constitution. Nothing would satisfy Charles but a “plenary despotism.” He had already—to use the words of a historian who is never carried away by feeling or rhetoric—“snapped like bands of tow the ancient statutes of the realm;”\* and he would now, if possible, subdue all resistance to his will by force of arms. We know how the conflict ended. That 22nd of August was a stormy day, and the Royal banner was blown down by the violence of the wind. Within a few years the cause of which it was the symbol was overthrown, and with it the monarch and the monarchy.

\* Hallam’s Constitutional History, Vol. I. 388.

Two hundred and thirty years have passed since the fatal day which inaugurated on the Castle Hill of Nottingham the great civil war of the seventeenth century; and it is incumbent on us to contrast our circumstances with those of our fathers, and consider the place and function which Providence assigns to us in the nineteenth century. How our fathers filled their place, and discharged their function, has been told and weighed by friend and foe. They were not blameless. Sitting quietly under our vine and fig-tree, it is an easy thing for us to discern and condemn their excesses. But the quietness with which we sit here and enjoy our hearths and altars, we owe in great measure to the blood that was shed at Naseby and on Marston Moor. Without caring to justify any extremes which the constitutional historian may discern in the acts of the Long Parliament, and without entering any pleas in defence of the sad tragedy of the 30th of January, 1649, we are bold to say that our fathers were "high-minded men," who deserved well of their country and of mankind. We are not ashamed of the patriots whom we reckon in this number, though not bearing the name of "Independent"—the Hampdens and Vanes and Pym, who long struggled peacefully against the arbitrary proceedings of the king—nor of those who, bearing the name of Independent, with Cromwell and Milton in the foremost place, were brought to the front, in the crisis of the nation's life, by their high principle and extraordinary capacity. We do not blush, in this good town of Nottingham, to identify ourselves with these men



and their compatriots, and to demand for them the thanks of a grateful posterity.

With changed circumstances, and in the new England which has arisen since the day of Charles the First's memorable visit to Nottingham, what is our place and function in the Commonwealth? and what the place and function of those other sections of the community which are substantially one with us in our ideas of ecclesiastical and national polity?

There is a class of Churchmen who, as we saw in May, will scarcely allow to us the name of Christian. There are Englishmen who will scarcely allow to us the name of English. We occupy a position of extreme doubtfulness in their esteem. They may disavow opinions which were held by their ancestors, but they inherit the sentiment which these opinions produced. We, not conforming to what they consider the greatest institution in the land, the most sacred, of which the Sovereign is the head, of which the National Legislature is the ruler, which binds high and low into one spiritual family, the inspirer and purifier of our social life, whose attributes and virtues it would be difficult for a tongue like mine to describe,—we, voluntarily separating ourselves from this great national institution, subject ourselves to suspicion and doubt. Why stand we all the day, all these many days, outside the great temple which England has built for the worship of Almighty God, which bears on its front the superscription of King, Lords, and Commons, and, some would say, is in lineal succession to the Church of the Apostles? There must

be some flaw in our mental or moral constitution. Our relation to the State must be of a bastard order. At the best we are only step-children of England. Not that those who think of us thus are prepared to confess that England has acted toward us the part of a step-mother, but that we yield to our mother only a step-child's affection and submission, and are entitled only to a step-child's portion.

That a feeling of this order exists in many influential classes cannot be doubted; but we deny its justness. We go farther, and claim to be not only true but the truest Englishmen, the English of the English. Listen, and you will hear on what we base this claim and boast.

If blood constitutes a man an Englishman, wherein do we differ from, or are inferior to, our neighbours? There may be but little Norman in the blood of Nonconformists; but in this respect Conformist and Nonconformist commoners are one. This precious fluid is supposed to flow purely in the veins of but a very small number of English families, and it seems rather paradoxical on their part to claim to be more English than their neighbours because they are more Norman. So far as the old Saxon, and the older British or Keltic, and later Danish and Scandinavian mixtures are concerned, we are certainly not one whit behind the chiefest of Churchmen. There is no test known to modern science which could discern a difference; but morally, if not physically, there is a difference, and it is on the ground of this difference we claim to be the truest Englishmen.

We are the representatives of those great principles, with the men who pled and suffered for them in the days of old, which have made modern England what it is, and which are now its most marked and cherished features,—the principles of Constitutional Government and Religious Freedom. In the Revolution Settlement of 1688, these principles gained, if not a complete victory, at least one that was irrevocable; and whose “effectual working” could not cease until it was complete. “The Revolution,” I quote Hallam’s words, “broke the spell that had charmed the nation. It cut up by the roots all that theory of indefeasible right, of paramount prerogative, which had put the Crown in continual opposition to the people. A contention had now subsisted for five hundred years, but particularly during the last four reigns [those of the four Stuarts] against the aggressions of arbitrary power. The Sovereigns of this country had never patiently endured the control of Parliament; . . . they had at their side the pliant lawyers who held the prerogative to be uncontrollable by statutes. And they had the Churchmen, whose casuistry denied that the most intolerable tyranny could excuse resistance to a lawful government.” In these circumstances England, as Hallam puts it, had no alternative but “a final submission to arbitrary power, unless by one great effort she could put the monarchy for ever beneath the law, and reduce it to an integrant portion, instead of the primary source and principle of the Constitution.”

The effort was made, and God prospered it. The

maxim which the Stuarts and their flatterers in Church and State called *Divine*—"A Deo Rex, a Rege Lex"\*—was reversed; and henceforward, under a new dynasty, which, though allied by blood with the old, and thereby possessing the advantage of the traditions of seven centuries, owed its accession to power to the Parliament and the people, the fundamental principle of the English government must be—"A Deo Lex, a Lege Rex."† The acknowledgment of this principle was but the consummation of the Charter which the Barons wrung from the Norman John, at Runnymede. And from the hour of its successful assertion in the Revolution of 1688, our English rights and liberties, not without frequent conflict and peril, have advanced to the ripeness in which we now find them.

We, Protestant Nonconformists, and those who, although not numbered with us ecclesiastically, are likeminded with us, are the nineteenth century representatives of those principles which, through the struggles of many centuries, distinguish our modern England, and have made her at once great and free. On this ground we claim to be the truest Englishmen, and to be, or to belong to, the true Constitutional party in the State. Those who so loudly arrogate the title of Constitutionalists to themselves

\* *Note for the sake of the unlearned.*—Literally, "From God the King, from the King the law;" *that is*, the King derives his authority from God, the law its authority from the King.

† Thus making the King to derive his authority from the law, not the law from the King.

in these days, are like the labourers in our Lord's parable, who began their work only at the eleventh hour. And if they get a whole day's wage for their one hour's work, it will assuredly be of grace and not of merit. Let them have it, if you will. Only let them not boast themselves against those who have toiled from the very dawn of our English freedom, and have borne the heat and burden of a long day. Still less let them attempt to supplant those who toiled long, not only without their aid, but in the face of their most persistent opposition, and claim an exclusive, or even an equal, right to their titles and honours.

A more complete misnomer cannot be imagined than the title "Constitutional" claimed by those who are the historical representatives of that party in the State which, both before the Revolution of 1688 and since that era, have maintained to the uttermost the principles which have been cast out of the Constitution in these later times as incongruous and evil. *We* are the historical representatives of the party in the State which has made the Constitution what it is, which struggled against the arbitrary claims of the Stuarts, which wrested England from the last of them when he was labouring to reduce it to a condition of civil and spiritual vassalage, which set William of Orange on the throne, which secured the succession after Queen Anne to the Elector of Hanover, the ancestor of Queen Victoria,—the party which secured to the nation the benefits of the Act of Toleration in 1689, and which has laboured con-

sistently to enlarge the benefits of that Act by purging from our statutes all remnants of intolerance and inequality.

If the civil freedom, whose seed was sown in the Magna Charta of the thirteenth century, be an essential element of our Constitution—we are staunch Constitutionalists. If that religious freedom for which Lollards, Reformers, Puritans, Independents struggled and bled, be an essential element of our Constitution—we are staunch Constitutionalists. If a limited monarchy, not an absolute, be essential to our Constitution—we are staunch Constitutionalists. (For, we may remark parenthetically, it was not a limited, but an absolute, or a would-be absolute, monarchy, that was overthrown in the great civil war. The Great Rebellion, as some call it, was not a rebellion of theoretic republicanism against monarchy, but that of a people whose faith had been abused and whose patience had been exhausted by the reigning Sovereign.) If the Hanoverian dynasty forms a part of the Constitution, we are staunch Constitutionalists. If King, Lords, and Commons are essential to our Constitution, we are Constitutionalists still; for if we object to the spiritual part of the Peerage, we believe it to be not of the essence of a House of Peers, but one of those incongruities which must be purged out before our Constitution can be pure and homogeneous.

If the establishment and support of religion by the State is a fundamental part of the English Constitution, we cannot claim a place among Constitutional-

ists. But if in this point we fail in loyalty to the sacred idea which many ignorantly worship, our failure is shared in principle by those who are most forward to cast the first stone at us. There is only one party in the Church of England, the Broad Church, and only a portion of that party, which does not contemplate the separation of the Church from the State as an eventuality which not only may occur, but which, under certain circumstances, they would themselves desire and promote. Our Evangelical brethren, tenaciously as they cling to the connection of the Church with the State, and much as they are willing to endure for the sake of it, have sometimes ventured to hint that, in the event of certain judicial decisions being given, they must secede. Let a new Gorham case arise, and let the decision be that the Anglo-Catholic interpretation of Baptismal Regeneration must be accepted, pure and simple, and we shall not do our brethren the wrong of imagining that they could contemplate the possibility of remaining in the communion of the Church. We should have another St. Bartholomew's. They must secede, and must hold, in seceding, that the Church, in the event supposed, has forfeited its right to the advantages of connection with the State, and, by plain consequence, that the connection should cease. The Anglo-Catholics, in certain other contingencies, would be equally forward to secede, and to maintain that the ground of their secession would be a lawful ground of disestablishment. Dr. Pusey at this moment threatens terrible consequences in the

event of the Athanasian creed being cancelled from the public services of the Church, or even of its use being made optional. The Church, in such a case, would, he believes, be a "new Church," fundamentally changed, and he is concerned that England should be forewarned of the inevitable consequence, secession. In fact, the portion of the Church to which he belongs do not believe in a connection of the Church with the State at all, properly so called, a connection involving control as well as support by the State. They regard the State as only ministering to the wants of the Church, and giving to the Church a certain measure of power and prestige. And when the State goes beyond this, they regard it as invading the sanctities and liberties of the Church.

Both these parties, then, comprehending the great bulk of English Churchmen, approve of the connection of the Church with the State, only so long as the Church, and the form of connection, are such as their conscience can accept. A fundamental change in the Church, or any serious modification of its relation to the State, would justify their secession, and justify thereupon a demand for separation. Shall we charge them with disloyalty to the civil Constitution of their country, in rendering thus only a conditional allegiance to the great "Church and State" Institution? Shall we hold that they are standing, and that consciously, on the very verge of Revolution, in that they are ready, at any moment, on the occurrence of certain eventualities, to abandon this institution, and even to demand that it shall



cease to be? If not, neither may we be held disloyal and revolutionary, in that, with a calm, clear judgment, founded on many reasons, we believe that the connection between the Church of England and the State should now cease and determine.

We go farther. We are not content merely to be absolved from a positive charge of unconstitutional beliefs and practices. We claim to be even in this matter the truest Englishmen. From the day when the law of England ceased to require uniformity in religion as a condition of English citizenship, the civil establishment of one form of worship has been an anomaly and an anachronism. Such establishment has been in the highest sense unconstitutional. True, it has struck its roots, far and deep, into the whole fabric of our social existence. But these roots are like those which I saw the other day in the Highlands, penetrating into the clefts of the rocks, finding nourishment where you would suppose no living thing could exist, for a time binding together or seeming to bind together the rocks on which they grow, and very picturesque to look upon, but, treacherous to the rocks which nurse and shelter them, gradually widening the clefts in which they have grown, and in the end rending the mightiest rocks in pieces. Like these, the roots of our Establishment no longer bind together but disintegrate society; they widen the clefts which separate section from section, cause endless bitternesses and jealousies, and are a source of weakness and danger to the common weal.

Claiming thus to hold tenaciously and to represent fully every portion of our Constitution, and most especially all its highest and noblest and most characteristic features, we claim to be *par excellence* the Constitutionalists of England. And on this ground we claim to be English of the English. There is no stain on our escutcheon. We are not step-children—yielding but a cold love and a reluctant homage to our mother. We love her with a love which is born not of sentiment merely, but of conscience likewise, which has already resisted and survived many a shock and trial, and which many waters will not quench.

This, we think, is our rightful place in the Commonwealth of England. But let us not be misunderstood. We do not assert for ourselves the possession of the heroism, and devotion, and self-sacrifice of our historical ancestors, nor do we hold ourselves responsible for any of their errors. In fact, we do not hold any party in the State now responsible, except so far as they voluntarily accept the responsibility, for the doings and sayings of their historical ancestors. It would be unjust to those from whom we are politically most alien—I forbear the use of any party name—to ascribe to them the principles on which the two Jameses and the two Charleses claimed to govern England—or to ascribe to them any want of loyalty to the dynasty which their fathers would have prevented ascending the English throne. There is only one party in these times which deliberately makes itself responsible for the deeds and misdeeds

of its ancestry; and that is more than a party—it is the Church of Rome. This great corporation accepts openly and avowedly the responsibility of all the more than slavish principles of its past history,—a fact of deep significance in relation to our present theme.

The Infallibility which in our own day has been placed among the unchangeable dogmas of Rome, means that the Pope possesses, by right, all the authority which was claimed by his predecessors over all the monarchies and kingdoms of the world,—authority to set up and pull down whom he wills of the kings of the earth, authority to commission foreign armies to stamp out the heroism and liberties of a free people, authority to order the cruellest work of the Inquisition, and to light the fires of Smithfield. The actual exercise of all this authority must depend, it is admitted, on circumstances—which means that the Pope will use it when he can and won't use it when he cannot. A Capuchin monk put the Roman doctrine into a simple and popular form the other day, when he roused the souls of 2,000 Swiss Catholics by saying—"Luther is the father of modern Liberalism and impiety, and one of his most devoted disciples, Guizot, has followed in his style by insisting that the Church should only speak to the heart and the intellect, and discard altogether any appeal to physical force. Now, I unhesitatingly tell you that, in my opinion, the State is the true father of the family. The Liberals want us to bring up children by kind words

and persuasion; the Holy Scriptures, on the contrary, tell us to chastise them. St. Francis de Sales was well whipped by his father for his first and last fault, and so effectual was the correction that he never forgot it. The State, in the same way, ought to employ not argument but the rod." Archbishop Manning believes this as well as the Swiss monk—only that both of them would object to Protestant States applying the rod to naughty Catholics.

The Archbishop pled for the proclamation of Infallibility by the Vatican Council, on the ground that for three hundred years the Pontiffs had elaborately and expressly condemned a long series of propositions in Theology and Philosophy, and the Church should know whether their words rested on the Divine authority, or were only venerable utterances. And among the condemned propositions was this, not raked up from a forgotten past, but sent forth by the present Pontiff—"That the Roman Pontiffs and Œcumenical Councils have exceeded the limits of their power, have usurped the rights of Princes, and have even committed errors in defining matters of faith and morals. That the Church has not the power of availing herself of force, or of any direct or indirect temporal power." This being the error condemned, the opposite truth is that the Roman Pontiffs have never exceeded the limits of their power, and have never usurped the rights of Princes, and that the Church *has* power to compel obedience to her mandates. Take another *thesis damnata*:—"That in the present day it is no longer

necessary that the Catholic religion be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other modes of worship; whence it has been wisely provided by the law, in some countries called Catholic, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the free exercise of their own worship." This theory being condemned, the truth, according to the Pope, is, that the Catholic religion shall be the only religion of the state, *to the exclusion of all others*, and that even foreigners residing in Catholic countries should not be allowed to enjoy the free exercise of their religion.

But how shall this theory of an exclusive Catholicism be realised? History answers the question. By imprisonment, by exile, by the Inquisition, by the stake! There is no misunderstanding here. This is the meaning, and it is known to be. Archbishop Manning is as much master of popular speech as the Capuchin monk, and might say to his English fellow-countrymen—"You may read your Bibles, and think for yourselves, and worship as you please, for the present; but this is an abnormal state of things, we are working to change it, and when the Pope has the power you shall worship only as he pleases." The Archbishop knows that all this is meant by the authority which the Pope claims. He urged the Council to take the words in which such authority is asserted out of the category of mere "venerable utterances," and to stamp them with the seal of a divine infallibility. He and his Church are now fastened immovably to a brazen pillar, on which are

inscribed all the persecutions of the mid-ages. And they glory in their position. They invite all the world to contemplate their immutability, and to take heed that they are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that it is only through lack of power, not of will, that the children of England are not whipped—to use the homely words of the monk at Fri-burg—even to death, to constrain them to believe in Transubstantiation and the Pope. No assertions of individuals to the contrary of all this are of any avail, in the face of the decisions of the Vatican Council.

In saying all this, I do not forget that Protestant Churches have been guilty of persecution. Episcopalians, having power, have persecuted; Presbyterians, having power, have persecuted; Congregation-  
alists, with a strange inconsistency, having power, have persecuted;—a fact which sufficiently demon-  
strates the danger of putting power into the hands of any ecclesiastical body. It is a temptation too great for human nature. But the difference lies here: persecution is not the creed of any Protestant church; it *is* the creed of the Church of Rome. The most loyal members of the Church of England may repudiate all the crimes against liberty committed by their ancestors. *We*, Congregationalists, could weep tears of blood over the story of the persecution of the Quakers and others, by the new England Churches in Massachusetts and elsewhere. But the Church of Rome has, before God and in the face of Europe, in this nineteenth century, deliberately accepted the responsibility of all the blood in which her steps may be

tracked in the ages that are past. Archbishop Manning is bound by his faith to believe, with Pope Paul IV., that the Inquisition was an especial inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; and the saddest proof of the degeneracy of the evil days on which we have fallen is that the sword has been taken out of the Pope's hand, and that he can slay the nations no more !

All this may seem a digression from my subject, but it is not. I have a two-fold object in saying these things. First, you will understand our place in England the better by its contrast with the place voluntarily assumed by the Roman Catholic Church. We claim to represent and embody the most sacred principles of our English Constitution. They repudiate these principles, not on political grounds, but on the authority and by the constraint of their religious faith. By an "infallible" act of the Pope, in 1571, Queen Elizabeth lost her right to the English throne, and the disability thereby created rests on Queen Victoria to this day. There is no principle more fundamental to the English Constitution than the right of every man to worship God according to the light of his own conscience. But this principle is fundamentally wrong, according to infallible Rome, and all who accept her teaching are bound to overthrow it. In view of this contrast, may I not repeat the claim on the part of the Protestant Nonconformists of England that they are the truest Englishmen, very English of the English ?

But this is not my only reason, nor my chief, for referring to the Roman Church on this occasion. Since we assembled in May, England has reached—shall I say passed through?—a crisis which, though much talked of, has not excited an interest at all equal to its magnitude. On Saturday, the 8th day of June, 1872—the date is memorable—there was an assembly, small in number, in an obscure chamber in Downing-street, to which was addressed a verdict which contains the seed of unmeasured good or ill to our native land. At the head of a long table there was a vacant chair, occupied in theory, but not in person, by the Queen. On the one side of this chair sat the Lord Chancellor, and on the other the Archbishop of York. The Bishop of London and six judges had seats on either side of the table. They were all plainly dressed—no wigs, no ermine, no gorgeous robes, the absence of show and of all ideality setting forth all the more significantly the intense reality of the occasion. The Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, rector of Frome-Selwood, had been charged with publishing doctrines contrary to those of the Church of England: (1) As to the presence of Christ in the Holy Communion; (2) as to sacrifice in the Holy Communion; and (3) as to adoration of Christ in the Holy Communion.\* In the first edition of the work

\* The judges summed up the errors charged upon Mr. Bennett in the following propositions:—

“1. That in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper there is an actual presence of the true Body and Blood of our Lord in the consecrated bread and wine, by virtue of and upon the conse-



on which the charges were founded, Mr. Bennett had described the presence of Christ on the altar as “real, actual, and *visible*.” In a later edition, in deference to the counsel of friends—Dr. Pusey especially—he substituted for these the words “real, actual, and *objective*,” avowing that he intended thereby no change of meaning.†

For many months the country and the Church

cration, without or external to the communicant, and irrespective of the faith and worthiness of the communicant, and separately from the act of reception by the communicant, and it was contended by counsel under this head that the true Body of Christ meant the natural Body.

“2. That the communion-table is an altar of sacrifice, at which the Priest appears in a sacerdotal position at the celebration of the Holy Communion, and that at such celebration there is a great sacrifice or offering of our Lord by the ministering Priest, in which the mediation of our Lord ascends from the altar to plead for the sins of men.

“3. That adoration is due to Christ present upon the altars or communion-tables of the churches, in the Sacrament, under the form of bread and wine, on the ground that under their veil is the Body and Blood of our Lord.

† As to the adoration due to Christ present on the altar under the form of bread and wine, Mr. Bennett had written:—“I do not know what others of my brethren in the Priesthood may think—I do not wish to compromise them by anything that I say or do; but seeing that I am one of those who burn lighted candles at the altar in the day-time; who use incense at the Holy Sacrifice; who use the Eucharistic vestments; who elevate the Blessed Sacrament; who myself adore, and teach the people to adore, Christ present in the Sacrament, under the form of bread and wine; believing that under their veil *is the sacred Body and Blood of my Lord* and Saviour Jesus Christ:—seeing all this,” &c.

waited anxiously for the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, on the question whether such teachings as these were lawful within the pale of the Church of England. When the suit began, the strong words used by High Churchmen on the one side, and by Low Churchmen on the other, were such that the secession of one or the other from the Church seemed a probable if not an inevitable result of the verdict that should be given. But now that the verdict has been given, the tide of Church affairs seems to flow on smoothly and calmly. There is indeed a slight ruffling of the waters—how deep it is, time will show;—but there is no such tempest as Church prophets had foretold. And yet, with all this calm, the verdict is one which will henceforth practically give a secure standing within the Church of England to a teaching which, it is confessed, nothing but the utmost subtlety can distinguish from the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

The Judicial Committee speak of Mr. Bennett's words touching the presence of Christ on the altar as "rash and ill-judged, and perilously near a violation of law;" but "yet not so plainly repugnant to the Articles and Formularies as to call for judicial condemnation." The Judgment read by the Archbishop of York on the 8th of June, makes a distinction between what the formularies of the Church definitively teach and what they exclude.\* Mr. Bennett's doc-

\* "Any presence which is not a presence to the soul of the faithful receiver, the Church does not by her Articles and Formularies affirm or require her ministers to accept. This

trines are not taught by these formularies, but are they excluded by them? Her Majesty, as the head of the Church, speaking through her representatives, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, thinks they are not, and consequently that Mr. Bennett may teach them without subjecting himself to the penalty of deposition from his office. The vicar of Frome may now say—"Henceforth let no man trouble me. I adore, and teach the, people to adore, Christ present in the Sacrament, under the form of bread and wine, believing that under their veil is the sacred body and blood of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And under the shield which protects him thus teaching, his brethren are protected likewise.

cannot be stated too plainly. The question is, however, not what the Articles and Formularies affirm, but what they exclude. . . . The assertion of a 'real, actual, objective' presence introduces indeed terms not found in the Articles or Formularies; but it does not appear to assert expressly, or by necessary implication, a presence other than spiritual, nor to be necessarily contradictory to the twenty-eighth Article of Religion." These are the terms of the "Judgment." It is perhaps not quite correct to say that they give even a negative *legal* sanction to the opinions which all the world believes Mr. Bennett to hold, and which he glories in holding; they rather assume that these opinions are not "necessarily" involved in his words. He is acquitted, not as holding Romish doctrine, but as using words which, though they go dangerously near such doctrine, may *possibly* mean something else. But though the decision does not give Mr. Bennett's *opinions* legal sanction, its practical effect is that these opinions, cautiously expressed, cannot be legally condemned.

Brethren of the Congregational Union, this matter concerns us deeply. It concerns us as Christians and as Englishmen, and we should be unfaithful to our place and function in this land if we did not give it our most solemn attention. The doctrines taught by the vicar of Frome are not the fancies of an isolated and erratic individual, but of an immense and rapidly growing party in the Established Church. And it is not a matter of concealment, but of boast, that they are essentially the peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome. The *peculiar* doctrines; for so far as the fundamental doctrines of the Trinity and the Godhead of the Saviour and the sacrifice of the cross are concerned, we, who are not of Rome, nor in sympathy with Rome, hold them as our very life. The *peculiar* doctrines of Rome—the priesthood of the Christian minister, the actual presence of the body and blood of our Lord in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper after due priestly consecration, and the doctrine that the Eucharist is a real sacrificial offering of our Lord by the ministering priest—these are the peculiar teachings of Rome and of the great party of which Mr. Bennett is but a type. Dr. Pusey labours hard in his "Eirenicon" to prove that the differences between the Council of Trent and the Anglican Church are verbal and not real. "The doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice," he says, "depends upon the doctrine of the real objective presence. Where there is the Apostolic succession and a consecration in our Lord's words, there, it is held by Roman authorities, is the Eucharistic sacrifice." "I am

persuaded," he says, "that on this point ("the Holy Eucharist") the two Churches might be reconciled by explanation of the terms used."

But I need not occupy your time in proving what is universally admitted. The House of Commons heard the boast the other day from a foremost defender of the Church of England, that doctrines ranging "from Romanist to Rationalist" may now be legally held and preached within her pale. The decision on the Gorham case gave protection to Evangelical teaching, that on the "Essays and Reviews" to Rationalism, and now the decision on the Bennett case gives protection, practically at least, to a form of doctrine which, as I have said, can be distinguished from that of Rome only by the utmost subtlety. "It is," according to a well-known Dean, "the last and crowning triumph of the Christian Latitudinarianism of the Church of England."

I do not pause at present to controvert the opinions of those who regard these judgments with satisfaction, and who glory in the comprehensiveness which embraces "from Romanist to Rationalist," as the very ideal of a Christian Church, or at least of a National Church. But this I say—and it is this that concerns us now as Englishmen—that if it be the ideal, it is an ideal which was not contemplated by the rulers or the people of England at any epoch of the Church's history from which you may choose to date her Constitution; and it is an ideal which, if submitted now to the suffrage of the people, would be rejected by an overwhelming majority. If the

present Church of England claims identity with the ancient, the reformed with the unreformed, need I demonstrate that its historical continuity requires that its doctrines should be homogeneous, and that they should be essentially Roman. If the essence of the present Church of England, usually called Protestant, be dated from the Reformation, it is equally certain that its doctrines must be anti-Roman, exclusively anti-Roman, those for which Cranmer and Latimer and Ridley and other martyrs gave up their lives, to the exclusion of those for the denial of which they suffered. If we date the Constitution of the Church from its restoration under Charles the Second, and the Act of Uniformity, it is equally certain, notwithstanding the incongruity between the teaching of the Articles and the teaching of some of the forms and offices then adopted, that the Church was designed to be exclusive and not comprehensive. The Judges may be right—and we do not challenge their decision—when, interpreting the words of statutes and formularies, they declare that the doctrines of Mr. Bennett, as taught in his words, are not so clearly excluded as to incur legal penalty. But their decision, taken in connection with former decisions, gives practical security to a comprehensiveness which no enacting power, either before or after the Reformation, contemplated. And it is for the nation now to say whether it will continue its national sanction and support to a Church which no longer teaches a consistent system of doctrines, but all varieties of doctrine, according to the

opinions of individual clergymen, "from Romanist to Rationalist."

The "Church Association," at whose instance Mr. Bennett was prosecuted, has adopted a "Declaration" which contains certain propositions that command our entire assent. Such as these:—1. That "the Martyrs laid down their lives rather than accept the grievous errors of the Church of Rome, now substantially affirmed by Mr. Bennett," a proposition on which I need make no comment. 2. That "since the Reformation, the main condition of the Church of England's existence, as the Established Church of this nation, has been its essentially Protestant character." A condition, let me say, which is no longer fulfilled. It is as "Protestant," the Church of England enjoys the revenues formerly possessed by the Church of Rome. But our Anglo-Catholics hate Protestantism, name and thing. They say, "The unfortunate word 'Protestant,' which so often occurs in Acts of Parliament, is employed solely in the sense of non-Roman. It does not connote any religious belief, any particular creed or form of Church government. It only means that which does not acknowledge the Papal political supremacy."\*

But is this a true reading of the history of the Reformation? Did England seek and gain nothing but relief from the autocratic rule of the Roman

"The Church and the World," first series, page 200. See also "Dissent in relation to the Church of England,—the Bampton Lecture for 1871, by G. H. Curteis," page 138.

Bishop, when she separated herself from Rome? The question is not as to the aim and motive of Henry VIII. when he renounced allegiance to the Pope, but, What was in the heart of the nation, and of the nation's leaders and teachers, in the great struggle of the Reformation period? You will find that the testing question, the final and conclusive question, put to both the learned and unlearned, at the bar of the Bishops in the reign of Henry's daughter, Mary, was not, Do you believe in the Pope? but, Do you believe in Transubstantiation? do you believe that the very body and blood of Christ are in the Eucharistic elements? It was felt on both sides that this was the pivot on which the question of the old and new faith turned. And they judged rightly. On this depends the whole system of priesthood and sacrifice in the Christian Church. The martyrs of Smithfield were charged with what were called *heresies* which struck at the very root of the Roman *doctrine*. And if they could have renounced these "heresies," they would have found it an easy thing to submit to the Pope. Their Protestantism was of the heart. It was an inward and intelligent renunciation of those very doctrines which, in substance, and almost in form, are held by the vicar of Frome, and which now, alas! need only to be stated with caution to escape legal condemnation. Hear Cranmer, who may certainly be accepted as an interpreter of the "Protestantism" of our law:—"What availeth it to take away beads, pardons, pilgrimages, and such other like Popery, so long as the chief roots remain



unpulled up? whereof, so long as they remain, will spring again all former impediments of the Lord's harvest, and corruption of His flock. The rest is but branches and leaves, the cutting away whereof is but like topping and lopping of a tree, or cutting down of weeds, leaving the body standing, and the roots in the ground; but *the very body of the tree, or rather the roots of the weeds, is the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation, of the real presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament of the altar* (as they call it), and of the sacrifice and oblation of Christ made by the priest for the salvation of the quick and the dead. Which roots, if they be suffered to grow in the Lord's vineyard, they will overspread all the ground again with the old errors and superstitions. These injuries to Christ be so intolerable, that no Christian heart can willingly bear them."\*

It is then perfectly true—and the truth is well put in the document which I have quoted, that “the main condition of the Church of England's existence as the Established Church of this nation has been its essentially Protestant character.” But now that *the condition is fulfilled no longer*, it follows, by both logical and moral necessity, that the Church of England has forfeited her right to existence “as the Established Church of this nation,” and that her existence *as such* should henceforth cease and determine, unless the nation should be pleased to re-estab-

\* “A Defence of the True and Catholick Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ.” Page 4 of Preface of Edition by the Rev. H. J. Todd, M.A.

lish her by new statutes on the new condition that she may preach all manner of doctrine "from Romanist to Rationalist."

The "Declaration" further contains these words, "Now we, the undersigned, feeling constrained to contend earnestly for the truth, and to avoid all complicity with false doctrine"—two important duties these—to contend earnestly for the truth and to avoid complicity with the false teaching which has now gained a firm foothold within the pale of their Church. But how may this be done? In either of two ways. First, the "Declarers" may demand of the State to let the Church go free, in order that she may exercise her own discipline and restore the Protestant character that has hitherto been the main condition of her existence as a National Establishment; or despairing of such an issue, they may avoid complicity with the neo-Popery of the Anglican Church by voluntarily relinquishing her fellowship. Either course will require courage, and will involve sacrifice. But what avails our faith, what avails the example of ancestors whom we almost canonise, if we have not sufficient courage for such a crisis as this, or shrink from the sacrifice which it requires? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses; and if in the land of peace, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

Are our brethren prepared for either of these courses? Some are—all honour to them—but the greater part are not. They contemplate a third

course, — a “DECLARATION!” — a *declaration* that the Church cannot effectually maintain her Protestant doctrines while certain of her clergy use with impunity language which ordinary intelligence cannot distinguish from the erroneous teaching of the Church of Rome, and that only by the exclusive teaching of Scripture doctrine can the Church of England continue to deserve confidence as the National Church of this Protestant country.\*

But what avails such a Declaration? What do you propose to *do*? Parodying the famous saying untruly ascribed to Augustine, — “Roma locuta est, causa finita est,” we say — “The law has spoken, the cause is concluded.” There is no appeal from the verdict of the Eighth of June. You cannot hope for a Parliamentary enactment to purge your services of the evil leaven which is now working so

\* The following are the words of the Declaration: — “We do most solemnly declare our conviction that the Church of England cannot effectually maintain the doctrines affirmatively asserted in the Judgment, while certain of the clergy use with impunity language which ordinary intelligence is unable to distinguish from the erroneous teaching of the Church of Rome. And we hereby further declare our conviction that such teaching is contrary to the word of God, and therefore dishonouring to our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ; and that only by the exclusive maintenance of pure and Scriptural doctrine can the Church of England vindicate its character as a pillar and ground of the truth, and continue to deserve confidence as the National Church of this Protestant country.” Whether this Declaration is ever presented to the country for signature or not, it may be accepted as containing the matured judgment of the Council of the “Church Association.”

disastrously, and to give you new rubrics that will not admit of the wide interpretation which allows Popery to be preached in your pulpits. How then can you secure that "exclusive maintenance of Scripture doctrine," without which you say the Church of England will no longer "deserve confidence as the National Church of this Protestant country?"

Oh! for a Chalmers and a Candlish to throw open the door before you, and to lead you forth to a position in which you can shake off the dust of all complicity with the heresies of Rome! Such a decision as that on the Bennett case would have convulsed Scotland from Tweed to John o' Groats, and the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* would have seized, not the Covenanter's claymore—let that rust in the mosses of Dumfries and Galloway—but the constitutional power which in these happier times suffices to effect revolutions. Let Englishmen arise and say that their National Church, reformed and instituted to be the teacher of a reformed faith, shall not, through virtue of legal technicalities, become the teacher of those errors which it was meant to destroy? Let the anti-Romanist party in the Church understand that only by one of two courses—secession, or the separation of the Church from the State with a view to self-reform—can they avoid complicity with the new condition of their Church? Let them secede, and we shall have stronger reason than ever to demand that the then Residuary Church shall cease to enjoy State patronage and support.

Let them remain where they are, but honestly demand separation, and freedom, that they may reform themselves, and we shall help them right heartily in their demand. I can appreciate the hesitancy with which they shrink from either, and the painful forebodings with which they ask—"What next?" But there are times when consequences must not be reckoned, crises in which men must act by faith and not by sight. It is God's prerogative to bring light out of darkness and order out of confusion. It is our part to commit our souls to Him in well-*doing*, as unto a faithful God, who leadeth men and churches by a way that they know not.

In the beginning of the reign of the first Charles, there was a crisis which historians have failed to notice, more real and momentous than may be found in any battle of his later life. There were two men in his court, the very embodiment of the antagonistic principles which afterwards came into deadly conflict, and which, with only formal differences, divide England to-day into opposing camps. William Laud had been clerk of the closet to King James, and had already shown what manner of man he was. Henry Burton had been clerk of the closet to the King's eldest son, Prince Henry, and on his death discharged the same office to Prince Charles. His character was as marked and clearly defined as Laud's. When tutor some years before to the sons of a noble knight, a religious matron, who took notice of his spirit, and of his "zeal against the Prelates'

pride and practices," remarked, "This young man will one day be the overthrow of the Bishops." When Charles ascended the throne of his father, William Laud became clerk of the closet to the new sovereign as he had been to the former—thus separating Henry Burton, for whom some other office was designed, from his prince. The young Puritan, observing that Laud and another like-minded, Bishop Neale, would henceforth be continually with the King, felt that there would be no abiding for him in court any longer. The royal house could not be the home of such contraries. But in his simplicity he believed that the young king, for whom he had a most unfeigned affection and regard, could not be aware of the real character of his servants; and he felt bound in conscience, "by virtue of his place," to inform the King "how Popishly affected they were," and to set forth "the dangerous consequences of entertaining such persons so near about him." This he did in a long letter, which he presented to the King with his own hand, standing before him while he read it. Mark the crisis.

There is a house on an eminence of the Rocky Mountains, so situated that the rain which drops from one side of its roof flows eastward to the Atlantic, and that which drops from the other side flows westward to the Pacific. A casual breath of wind, as the rain descends on that house, determines whether its destiny shall be the Atlantic or the Pacific. In the Grampians and other mountain regions you will find rivulets, the beginnings of great rivers, so small

that a child's foot may so turn their course as to determine on which of opposite shores they shall fall into the ocean. Even so is it in the history of individuals and of nations.

On the effect of Henry Burton's letter on the young king's mind, it depends whether England shall pass into a great sea of storm and trouble, in which many precious things shall be wrecked, and in which neither sun nor stars shall appear for many days, or whether her future shall be one of peace and progress and freedom. The confusions of the great civil strife are now waiting for the King's word to let them loose. And the angel of truth and liberty is there, pleading with the King's heart and conscience to refrain from those men whose counsels will be his and his country's ruin. How is it that no great painter has seized this critical moment in English history to expend on it the strength of his genius and art? There stands the King in the foreground, anxiously scanning the letter of his faithful servant. At a respectful distance you have the Puritan, with a mingling of boldness and fear, watching the expression of his Sovereign's face. Poetry will allow us to put William Laud and Richard Neale into the background, confident of speedy victory, and yet with some expression of wonder as to "whereunto this will grow." The issues are momentous, but the hour of decision is not long delayed. The King reads a "good part" of the letter, perceives its scope, hands it back to its author, and calmly bids him forbear attendance in his office,

until he is sent for. The die is cast; Popery and despotism—we say Popery advisedly—have won the day; England must go into the Star Chamber and the High Court of Commission, until mortal endurance is exhausted; and then will come a convulsion in which Henry Burton, after being the victim of the pillory, shall become the hero of the day; and William Laud, the successful wrong-doer, shall perish by the earthquake which his own tyranny has caused.

England, in the person of its rulers, did not know the day of its visitation. Let England know it now, and determine whether the Eighth of June, 1872, shall be a black or red-letter day in her calendar. If others do not see its possible consequences for good or ill, let not us be blind. If others do not see in the late decision of the Judicial Committee a reason for the separation of the Church from the State, we do. With our principles we must demand separation, even if the pulpits of the Church preached the purest Protestantism. But now that the pulpits of the Establishment may, without effectual challenge, preach substantial and all but nominal Popery, we have double reason for demanding separation. The Establishment is no longer distinctively Protestant, distinctively that for which it was established. Its title to the revenues of the State is morally forfeited; and we dare not be parties to the treason which would allow our nominally Protestant Establishment to be the means of re-converting England to the



Romanism from which she was delivered in the sixteenth century.

All this we urge in the interests of truth, and of the spiritual life which depends on truth. We urge it likewise in the interests of the future freedom of the land. The political ascendancy of Popery would be death to our religious liberties. I do not say this from prejudice, but on grounds which I trust I have already made sufficiently clear, and which I will not repeat. I do not overlook the difference between the doctrinal Popery of our Anglo-Catholics and the ecclesiastical Popery which recognises the infallible headship of the Bishop of Rome; nor do I charge our Anglo-Catholics with any conscious conspiracy against our liberties, such as that which may be charged against those whose avowed creed is that force may be lawfully used to repress error; but I cannot hide from myself the fact that our Anglo-Catholics look on union with Rome as a consummation most devoutly to be wished, and that, in their discussion of the difficulties in the way of union, they make little of the fact that the garments of Rome are steeped in the blood of God's saints, and that the blood-shedding of the past is approved unto this day. Dr. Pusey, indeed, in relating instances in which Infallibility is claimed for the Pope, mentions the doctrine that "corrective force"—a strange euphemism for persecution unto death such as was perpetrated in the days of Queen Mary—is essential to the maintenance of the Catholic faith. And in another place he says incidentally: "Probably, too, there is

an hereditary dread [in England] of the renewal of the fires of Smithfield, the sinfulness of which has never been disavowed." But the most zealous advocates of re-union with Rome do not think it worth their while to refer to this matter. They labour hard to "get over" the difficulties which the Thirty-nine Articles raise in the way, but the unchangeably intolerant and persecuting spirit of Rome seems no difficulty at all.

Are our liberties safe in the keeping of such men? Personally they may be unconscious of any desire to see the fires of Smithfield rekindled; but they have, with their eyes open, entered, and are urging forward on, a path which will end in union with or absorption in a Church which holds the kindling of such fires to be a right and religious thing.\* And let this Church but have the power, and all the science and civilisation and manhood of the nineteenth century will be only as cobwebs to be swept out of the way of her dominion over the lives and consciences of men.

\* In the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1872, p. 179, will be found the following quotation, descriptive of the Marian persecution, from a History of England used in the Roman Catholic schools of this country:—"The whole country was diseased with heresy, and it was impossible to stop it by gentle means. In this case, you know, when men are determined to destroy not only their own souls but the souls of many others, they have to be treated as malefactors, and are given over by the Church to the law to be punished. It is very shocking that people should be burnt, but it is much more shocking that they should be eading so many more people to be burnt in the flames of hell for ever."

We are thus brought by another circle of thought to the conclusion to which we were led in vindicating our position as Englishmen. Disestablishment, we saw then, instead of being unconstitutional and revolutionary, is a normal and legitimate development of the Constitution, a casting out of incongruous elements. Disestablishment, we see now, is equally necessary in the interests of that Protestant truth and freedom to which Popery is the irreconcilable foe. If Englishmen are not content to be carried back to Rome by the very institution which they have endowed for the defence of Protestantism, they must demand that the State shall withdraw from it all that it has given it, all that makes it—at least in a legal sense—national; and if other Englishmen do not understand this great necessity of our times and of our country, we do. For this end were we born as a people, for this end, though not this alone, we exist as a community, that we, with others like-minded, may bear witness to the truth of God concerning his own kingdom, and be the means of giving that truth form and body in the institutions of England.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am no Iconoclast, nor is our function that of Iconoclasts. The end of my argument is not to summon you to a new war or to new forms of war, but to assert for our separation and our antagonism to the connection of Church and State, that it is not un-English, nor a thing of violence, but the outgrowth of principles which, being true, and being at least germinally recognised in our

civil Constitution, are sure, sooner or later, to find their consummation in—"a Free Church in a Free State." We are not a political party, however much our affinities may draw us to one party rather than another; and we cannot predict which of our two great parties it is that will formally effect the separation of the Church from the State. Great changes, towards which progress has long been making, are often consummated in the end by what we call accidents, events that are out of all reckoning, unforeseen and sudden. If I may revert to my Highland figure, the rock is finally torn asunder, not by the mere growth of the roots which have struck into its fissures, but by forces for which these roots, in their beginnings feeble and harmless, made preparation—the forces of frost and storm. "He that believeth shall not make haste." We are quite content to wait in patience until the fulness of the time shall come. And we shall not shrink from then inscribing on our banner, in all sincerity, as we do now, the very legend that was inscribed on the unfortunate banner of Charles the First, on the Castle Hill of Nottingham, "Give Cæsar his due."

Meantime—and at all times—would we discharge our duty to our country, we must labour to do practical justice to our own principles, and to see that they be developed into the highest possible efficiency.

Our first duty is to preach Christ's Holy Gospel—in the pulpit, in the Sabbath School, and at the

fireside—a duty, however, on which I will not enlarge, because it is one common to all Churches and all Christian societies. Only this—that, so far as denominational growth, and, what is infinitely more important, the salvation of the souls of men, are concerned, it is by the faithful preaching of the Gospel, accompanied by the Spirit of God, not by polemical discussions, that these ends are to be accomplished. And this I may add, that those who associate our name only with politics and debate would be astonished, if they entered our places of worship, to find how exclusively our ministers occupy themselves with spiritual truth and duty. Rarely, most rarely, would they hear a word from our pulpits that should remind them of our ecclesiastical or social divisions. They would find that whatever importance we attach to these, there are other things to which we attach an importance that is measureless and absorbing.

We glory in our Catholicity and in the Catholicity of Congregationalism. When we lead the devotions of our people in public worship, we have no idea that the ear of Our Father in Heaven is turned more lovingly towards our prayers and praises, than towards those which ascend from Churches of other names around us. It is our joy, in the very act of worship, to think of our common Father and common Saviour as bending His loving regards towards our neighbours as well as ourselves, and thus by His love binding them and us into a closer fellowship than ourselves recognise, in the great commonwealth of God.

But there are things peculiar to our polity which it concerns us so to practise that they shall not be evil spoken of, but shall rather contribute to the common good. And if your time permitted, which it does not, it would have been a satisfaction to me to utter some long-cherished sentiments on these subjects. But I forbear. On only one point would I venture to remark—our oft-avowed principle of spirituality in our membership. I offer no defence of the principle against those who think that the Church should be co-extensive with the nation, or with the baptised portion of it, or against those who demand at most only a moral and honourable life. But assuming that we regard the possession of a spiritual life as the true qualification for membership in our Churches, let us be true to ourselves that we may be true to our country. If we discontinue or relax some modes of testing the existence of the spiritual life which were once common, let it not be to render it easier for unconverted men to enter our Churches. And above all, professing to be spiritual, let our spirituality be practical, pure, enlightened, intense. It may be questioned whether, as ministers, we study sufficiently the means of building up our people in all goodness, and of guarding them against the dangers which beset their Christian path. I know the grandeur of the work of those who labour for the conversion of souls, and no word shall be heard from my lips which can be construed into a questioning of its importance and urgency. But there are other things which should not be left undone. "This also we wish,

even your perfection," Apostles said to their converts. And they did not leave the wish to fulfil itself, or even to be fulfilled by the spontaneous growth of inward principle. "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you," said the chiefest of the Apostles. He warned every man and taught every man in all wisdom, striving up to the measure of that Divine energy which was working in him mightily, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He was deeply impressed with the great powers of evil which opposed the spiritual growth and perfecting of the saints; the corruption of morals which made it almost impossible for a man to breathe the atmosphere of Corinth and be pure; the chaotic thinking, and the false philosophising, which made it very hard for a man to live in Colosse and retain the truth as it is in Jesus in uncorrupted simplicity; and with the same zeal with which he laboured to turn idolaters from idols to the living God, he laboured to build up the saints in all truth and godly living, even unto a perfect manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

This work is as needful as ever. Influences for evil, not quite so offensive perhaps as those which prevailed of old in the great cities of the heathen world, but scarcely less injurious to spiritual health, are rife to-day in our Christian England. You feel them not in the great city alone, but in the village and hamlet. They seem to permeate the atmosphere we breathe. And how to resist them, how to defend

ourselves and our Churches against them, how to build up a pure Christlike Church in the midst of them, is a problem which should send us in trembling anxiety to our great Master for wisdom and strength. We dare not yield to the paralysis and despair which a sense of our own weakness might produce, for we have sufficiency in God.

In addition to the spiritual dangers common to all, it appears to me that there are some which, if not peculiar to us, yet beset us in larger measure than they do some others. Our congregations belong for the most part to the *middle* middle class. There are many in them of the very poorest of the land—in which we greatly rejoice. And there are a few of the richest. But as compared with others, we at least approximate the truth when we say that for the greater part our people belong to a stratum of society which may be described as the *middle* middle class. And herein I see a danger. This class has always been, and is likely always to be, very active in the current politics of the day. We dare not chide their activity, we would not restrain it. They are exercising a privilege, and they are discharging a duty.

It has become a fashion to applaud those who in the ages of the decline of the Roman Empire and in the ages which followed, ages of rude violence and rude morals, cultivated the Godward side of their nature in cloisters and desert places. But making all allowance for the difficulties which drove them and the aspirations which drew them away from society, and not withholding our admiration from



what of purity and devoutness they attained, we must hold that their solitude and asceticism were not of faith, but of unbelief. It was not the strength of their faith, but its weakness, that separated them from mankind. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." They were traitors to the place which Christ assigned them. Lest the salt should lose its saltness, they withdrew it from the mass which it should season. Lest their light should go out, they placed it under a bushel. Their conduct is not an example, but a beacon.

Our people do right when they take part in the politics, that is, in the government, of their parishes and towns, and in the general politics of the country. But let them take heed how they do it. There are practices, not those grosser practices of which the law takes cognizance, but practices less flagrantly evil than these, that are offensive to a mind that is instinct with Christian rectitude and honour, but which are shielded from the reprobation they deserve by the plea of necessity. "All things are lawful in war," we are told. "You cannot accomplish your end if you are too nice as to the means." Brethren, nothing can be necessary that is not right. The Christian law, which requires of Christians whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure and lovely, admits of no exceptions; and Christian men will add greatly both to their personal moral strength and to their social influence, by obeying it in the face of every disadvantage and sacrifice. Even the en-

grossment of mind and heart which active political life involves is perilous to our spirituality, as is indeed engrossment of mind and heart in any form or from any cause. And we and our Churches need much watchfulness and prayer that our spiritual strength be not lost, and our spiritual sensibilities be not blunted, through the very duties to which Providence calls us.

Closely connected with this is another form of social danger. Even in our army men sometimes rise from the ranks to be commanders. But in our social life it is far more common. In our great centres of manufacture and commerce you will find, not solitary instances, but crowds of instances, of workmen becoming masters, and not masters merely, but possessors of immense wealth. The romance which in other days gathered around moated towers and castles, with their Percies and Douglasses of ballad-memory, now gathers around great piles of brick filled with cotton and jute and alpaca, and around names more worthy of honour than the swordsmen of the days of yore. In the towns and vales of the northern counties, you will hear tales of rich men and their fathers, truer but not less interesting than the legend of Richard Whittington. We thank God for it. Our classes are not stereotyped. There is no gulf separating one from another. The transition, the ascent, is frequent, sometimes rapid, sometimes effected at a bound. But it is very different from the changes of which we read in the days of the decline of Rome. "Overgrown fortunes were

often acquired in those days by wretches of the meanest stamp, by slaves brought from over the sea, who had to conceal the holes bored in their ears; or even by malefactors who had to obliterate, by artificial means, the three letters ('fur') which had been branded by the executioner on their foreheads." "The people of the greatest influence were the freedmen of the Emperors—men who had been slaves, Egyptians and Bithynians who had come to Rome with chalk on their feet to show that they were for sale—who had acquired enormous wealth by means often the most unscrupulous and the most degraded, and whose insolence and baseness had kept pace with their rise to power." Thank God! the tales we have to tell of the "rise and progress" of our rich men are of another order. Not by their vices, and their subserviency to the vices of others, have they risen from the ranks, but by their virtues,—by enterprise and industry and tact—by understanding of the times to know what merchants ought to do. Could we trace the story of their upward struggles as we do the history of great campaigns in war, we should find equal reason to admire skill and energy and high qualities of soul, and equal reason to wonder at what we call the surprises and caprices of fortune.

But this great good of our times is not without a dark shadow. We have the highest authority for regarding riches as a great temptation. The possession of wealth is not a sin, but, through the weakness of our nature, it is apt to gender sin, the

sin of selfishness and luxury, of pride and idolatry. When suddenly acquired the danger is all the greater. The men who are thus favoured—in some cases it would be more correct to say, who are thus cursed—are not prepared by education, by gradually acquired habits, by moral discipline, for the new position in which they are placed. And instead of passing severe censures on the foibles, and worse than foibles, in which satire delights to revel, we owe to these men our most humane indulgence, and our deepest compassion. Happily it is possible for those who rise to princely fortunes to be princely in spirit, as we see by illustrious examples which are known and read of all men. And that it is possible to retain Christian simplicity and piety, amid the temptations of suddenly acquired wealth, may be proved by the lives of not a few. And yet it may be feared that the princely spirit and the Christian simplicity are the exception and not the rule. The luxuriousness and costliness and extravagance of the living and of the palaces,—I can scarcely call them homes,—of many of our “self made men,” absorb an amount of wealth and of thought which, if devoted to the public good, would, so far as external appliance could do it, regenerate the land.

Are we clear in this matter? Do our Churches and congregations furnish no examples of the selfish and self-indulgent, who, if they pay tithes at all to the service of God or man, tithe only their mint and anise and cummin? men who, while they profess to be born of God and bought with the blood of His

dear Son, are scarcely ruffled by the wail of dying nations, and are as self-complacent in the display of their wealth as the merest worldling? Brethren, our Churches can occupy the place which God has given them in England, and fulfil its duties, only in so far as they acquire a spirituality and a devotion which will lay their wealth and social influence on the altar of our common weal.

It is not in the spirit of a selfish nationalism that I plead for our common weal. Humanity is like the Church in this, that, though it be one body, it has many members, and God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased Him. Rivalries and enmities, wars and fightings, between the members of this great body, are as unnatural as they are unchristian. But every member hath not the same office. It is not of chance, but by a Divine ordaining, that the climes of the world differ, and that their productions differ. Nor is it of chance, but by the same Divine ordaining, that one race differs from another. Their very differences are an indication that they were meant to be helpers one of another, supplying each other's need, and contributing each its share to the common stock. The Teuton cannot say to the Kelt, I have no need of thee; nor can the Kelt say to the Latin, I have no need of thee. England cannot say to France, I have no need of thee; nor can France say even to Germany, I have no need of thee. And we believe in a time coming when each nation will bring its own gift,

whether it be strength or refinement, intellect or imagination, courage or tenderness, the fruit of the field or the fruit of the loom, the work of the hand or the work of the brain, and ask every other nation in the name of the God of nations, the Father of all, to partake of the common joy.

Meanwhile it is ours, not selfishly, but with a view to the good of all nations, to labour and pray for the cleansing of our land from all defilement, and its ennobling with every grace and virtue. We do not speculate of the future. The history of the fall of empires in the past forbids us to indulge in a proud security. From the banks of the Nile and of the Euphrates and of the Tigris, we hear the voice which says, "Be not high-minded but fear." The common sequence of virtue and wealth, wealth and luxury, luxury and corruption, corruption and decay, may be recited in an after-age as summing up the history of Great Britain. But we trust that a better destiny awaits us. We have no fear of international strife. Thank God that we have learnt in these last days that reason is a better arbitrament than the sword—may the lesson never be forgotten! Nor have we any fear of those great discoveries of mineral wealth in many lands, which to some are ominous of a time when our mineral wealth shall be exhausted, and when the eminence which it creates shall be transferred to others; the rise of other lands does not necessitate the depression of ours.

The darkest cloud in our horizon is the war

of class with class in our industrial community—now so wide-spread and intense. It is not for me to attempt any balancing of the merits or demerits of the questions at issue between what is called Capital and Labour. Still less can I attempt to prescribe the means by which, either through the legislature or otherwise, these questions may be settled. But this I know, that there are principles in our Bible which, if they be but accepted and cordially acted on, will bring our social wars to an end, and unite class to class in an industrial confederacy that shall be brotherly and permanent. There is not only the principle of rectitude in the dealings of man with man, not as the best policy, which it is, but as the will of the Most High God which no one may violate with impunity; there is also the principle of love, as sacred as the principle of rectitude, the principle which is embodied in such sayings as these—“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s well-being,” “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,” “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them likewise.” Get these principles into the heart of the community—and surely this is not impossible—and misunderstandings may arise, but they will be healed without difficulty and without danger. Masters and men together, concerned only for the things that are just and equal, not selfishly and to the death struggling to gain the uttermost advantage, but imbued with an honest and religious desire to promote the

common interest,—capital and labour, employers and employed, will cease from jealousy and strife, and recognise the duty, under the eye of God, of working in harmony and peace. Whatever others do let us do our duty. Are we masters or are we servants? Let us be Christians in either capacity, and show that we are subject to that higher law which demands that we love our neighbours as ourselves.

Our hope for England is in our God. The age of miracles is past, but the age of Providence is not. We would fain see in our geographical position, our composite race, our ripened history, our constitutional liberties, our commercial communion with all nations, signs that God wills to use us more than ever for the good of mankind. But our hope is in God Himself, in the power of His gospel to sanctify our people, and in the faithfulness of His Church to her mission. And, God helping us, we will not cease from holy toil and fervent prayer till the English nation shall be, in the words of Milton, “as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body.”









